

Book review

Diagnose und Therapie der Geschlechtskrankheiten. By J. SÖLTS-SZÖTS and E. M. KOKOSCHKA. 1973. Pp. 133, 9 tables, 15 figs. Wilhelm Maudrich Verlag, Vienna. (Sch.190; £3.62)

In this work on the 'Diagnosis and Therapy of Venereal Diseases', the authors (from the Dermatological Clinic of the University in Vienna) give a comprehensive account of modern methods in the diagnosis and management of the principal sexually transmitted diseases with a brief clinical description.

The book is divided into four sections preceded by a short chapter (6 pages) on the epidemiology of venereal diseases. The first section (pages 7 to 59) is devoted to syphilis. Current techniques in the detection of treponemes, serological tests and their interpretation, general principles of treatment with penicillin, the use of other antibiotics, and the assessment of cure are very well reviewed. Of particular value are illustrations graphically explaining the principles on which the TPI, reactive and non-reactive FTA, and TPHA tests are based. The second section (pages 60 to 91) deals with gonorrhoea. The superiority of cultural methods over smears is demonstrated, strangely enough, by a decrease in the rate of false diagnoses and not by an increase in the rate of detecting the gonococcus. Infections by other *Neisseria* species and by *Mimae* (*M. polymorpha*), rare in Gt. Britain, are relatively frequent in some parts of Europe and obviously constitute a diagnostic problem. The third section (pages 92 to 96) discusses briefly the diagnosis and treatment of the three minor venereal diseases (chancroid, lymphogranuloma venereum, and granuloma inguinale) under the heading *ulcus molle*, *lymphopathia venerea*, and *granuloma venereum*. The fourth section (pages 97 to 115), entitled 'Non-gonococcal Urethritis due to Micro-organisms', deals with urethral infection caused by bacteria, trichomonads, fungi, mycoplasmas, and viruses. Most of this section is devoted to bacterial urethritis caused, in order of frequency, by coagulase-positive staphylococci, *E. coli*, and non-gonorrhoeal *Neisseria* and *Mimae*. Just over one page is given to urethritis due to chlamydial infection. In all forms of non-gonococcal urethritis the advisability of examining and, if necessary, treating the sexual partner is pointed out.

There are a few omissions, inaccuracies, and debatable points in the book. The Reiter protein

complement-fixation test, widely used for screening in Great Britain, is not mentioned. The introduction of penicillin in the treatment of syphilis is wrongly attributed to Lourie and Collier¹ who actually published a report in 1943 (not 1942)¹ on the effectiveness of penicillin in experimental *S. recurrentis* infection and suggested that it *might* prove useful in syphilis at the same time as Mahoney, Arnold, and Harris² reported on the first experience in treating syphilis with penicillin. Many clinicians will dispute the authors' classification of patients requiring abortive treatment, in particular a baby born to a mother inadequately treated during pregnancy. On the other hand no mention is made of a woman exposed to the risk of infection during pregnancy. Amongst the various drugs listed for the treatment of gonorrhoea one is surprised not to find kanamycin and ampicillin. The action of probenecid in raising penicillin blood levels is not mentioned. In chronic gonococcal prostatitis 2 g. ampicillin daily is recommended as an adjunct to act against associated organisms producing penicillinase. This may be effective against the small amounts of penicillinase produced by *E. coli*, to which ampicillin is less sensitive than benzylpenicillin, but not against staphylococcal penicillinase by which it is inactivated. Metronidazole is given as the only trichomonocidal agent, no mention being made of nimorazole. Reiter's disease is not taken into account at all. Although the bibliography extends from page 117 to 133, one or two more pages could be added if all the authors referred to in the text were included. Several errata, mostly consisting of mis-spellings of names and Latin words, may irritate the fastidious reader.

Despite these few shortcomings the book can be recommended to anyone seriously interested in the practice of venereology. It is well laid out and very readable, and the section on syphilis is outstanding.

There is no index, but a detailed list of contents at the beginning of the book makes it unnecessary. Prof. K. Kiraly has written the preface in English and German.

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References

- (1) LOURIE, E. M., and COLLIER, H. O. (1943) *Ann. trop. Med. Parasit.*, **37**, 200
- (2) MAHONEY, J. F., ARNOLD, R. C., and HARRIS, A. (1943) *J. vener. Dis. Inform.*, **24**, 355